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STREETVIBES

ADVOCATING JUSTICE • BUILDING COMMUNITY

Blankets, Water and Other Bad Ideas



People in homeless camps often need basic necessities. *REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson.*

Helping homeless people isn't so simple

By GREGORY FLANNERY
EDITOR

People are living in tents and shacks in isolated pockets of urban Cincinnati. They generate trash, as we all do, but they don't have an easy way to dispose of it.

Last month a religious group decided to help, visiting homeless camps and removing trash.

The camps were cleaner for a while. The volunteers were proud of their work. But does this kind of volunteering, helpful in the short term, make the problem worse?

The consequences of charity aren't always positive. That's why some people donate to large non-profit organizations but spurn panhandlers. Charity can have political implications (see "On the Left Side of God," below). For some people, charity is first and foremost a religious act.

To social workers engaged in the complex business of helping people living an

almost feral life, simple acts of charity sometimes can be an impediment to bringing them indoors, making it easier for them to stay on the outside.

Enabling homelessness

Members of John 15:12 Ministries visited homeless camps Oct. 9 after first distributing trash bags to residents who wanted their assistance. Rumpke, a trash-disposal company, sent a garbage truck for the volunteers to fill.

John 15:12 Ministries takes its name from this statement by Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament: "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." The organization's goal went beyond tidying up homeless people's quarters, according to an announcement distributed the week before the event.

"The most important part of this event is to show them we love and care about them, just as Jesus loves all of us," the announcement said. "To learn from them and about them, and to just be good neighbors. ... This is an awesome opportunity to get out on the front line and truly see what homelessness

See **Blankets**, P. 9

On the Left Side of God

Politics in the world of charity

By JOANNE ZUHL

Portland, Ore. – A 4-inch-square, 96-page booklet once was considered the embodiment of social justice and empowerment of the poor, and for years its publisher attracted financial backing from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) through the Archdiocese of Portland.

The local Catholic Campaign – a private nonprofit foundation operated by the United States Conference of



Conservative Catholics are working to end funding for poverty-alleviation programs. *REUTERS/Tony Gentile.*

Catholic Bishops – helped launch the booklet with a \$5,000 grant in 2008, making sure information on health care, shelter, employment and supportive services was in the hands of people experiencing homelessness and poverty.

That was until this spring, when a call to the office of Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of Portland pointed out the offense on page 25. There, under the category of health care, was a listing for Planned Parenthood, which in a half-

inch space included a description of the various basic services, including contraception that the organization provides to low- or no-income customers seeking health care.

The message from CCHD managers at the Portland Archdiocese, although supportive of the booklet's overall mission, was made clear in terms of funding: If Planned Parenthood remained in the booklet, CCHD, in keeping with Catholic teaching, could no longer fund Street Roots, the publisher of the Rose City Resource guide. Street Roots decided to keep the listing.

But what was behind the call? Why now? What changed after five years of CCHD support for Street Roots? How did

a piece of information suddenly morph into a theological offense?

Starting in autumn 2009, other groups began asking the same questions. The Chinese Progressive Association in San Francisco was among the first to get the call: CCHD, one of the founding funders for the 38-year-old Association, had to cut ties with the workers' rights program. Also in California, the Young Workers United was told it was being cut from funding as well, as was the Rebecca Project for Human Rights, which helps homeless and disadvantaged women who have children. L.A. Community Action Network was "defunded" at its

See **On the Left**, P. 6



BY THE NUMBERS

3.92

The amount, in billions of dollars, of Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds approved by Congress in 2008 (see page X).

25,000

The number of African-American and Hispanic students Steve Sunderland helped integrate at City University of New York (see page 16).

32

The length of time, in years, that “Michael” has been “a sober drunk” (see page 3).

1

The number of record labels The Retros have talked to so far (see page x).

Twice

The number of times the Ugandan vice president’s husband admitted hitting her (see page X).

27

The number, in millions, of Americans who take anti-depressants (see page X).

25

The page number of the ad in the Rose City guide that cost Street Roots its grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (see page 1).

15:12

The chapter and verse of the Gospel of John that gives one homeless ministry its name (see page 1).

98.5

The combined prison sentences, in years, served by non-violent protesters at the School of the Americas (see page x).

Streetwise

By GREGORY FLANNERY
EDITOR

You Are One of the Reasons We’re So Odd

This is a funny business, putting together a street newspaper. By way of giving thanks, I’d like to tell you some of what’s involved.

Our cartoonist, Anne Skove, has a job in the legal profession that involves lots of travel. In addition to drawing for *Streetvibes*, she recruits new writers and sends postage stamps for our use.

Our arts columnist, Saad Ghosn, is a physician. He wrote this week’s column (“Artists as Activists”) and two others prior to leaving the country for a month to care for a dying relative.

One of our photographers, Jon Hughes, is chair of the Journalism Department at the University of Cincinnati. Another, Vinit Murthy, is a particle engineer at Procter and Gamble. Another, Aimee Willhoite, is a full-time college student.

Our proofreader, Jeremy Flannery, examines the entire edition at night, after getting off work.

One of our writers, Margo Pierce, is a freelance journalist who has won national awards. She is also a busy volunteer and board member of a local non-profit organization. Yet she has spent hundreds of hours consulting with the paper on design, planning and fundraising.

Our new graphic designer, Elizabeth Schulenberg, lays out the pages after she’s finished with her full-time graphics job.

Our social critic and film critic, David Heitfield, has worked as editor of two daily newspapers, as a defense attorney and as an assistant prosecutor.

Our printing costs are covered in part by the generosity of United Nations Appeals Judge Mark Painter and by the Sisters of Charity.

Many of our writers, such as Carly Tamborski, Corey Gibson, Samantha Groark and Brian O’Donnell, are full-time college students with part-time jobs who make time to interview people, research issues and write news stories about what they learn.

Our poets include Bonnie Neumeier, director of the Peaslee Neighborhood Center; Spencer Ledyard, stationed in Afghanistan with the U.S. Air Force; Rick Stansberger, a teacher; and homeless people who struggle just to survive.

Stephen Paul Lansky, a professor at Miami University, shares short stories and an occasional painting with us.

Reuters, the international news syndicate, lets us publish its photographs.

Some of our vendors, such as Lee McCoy and George Herrell, write essays about their experiences. Other vendors, such as Willa Davis, write poetry. Another vendor, Anthony Williams, contributes his drawings.

Our food writer, Jeni Jenkins, creates new dishes and photographs them – after her day job as education coordinator for the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless.

One of our writers, Ariana Shahandeh, makes Persian delicacies and delivers them to our office for our vendors and other homeless people to enjoy.

I’m sometimes invited to talk to students and other groups about *Streetvibes*. I always tell them, “*Streetvibes* is the oddest newspaper you’ll find in Cincinnati.” That’s true on a variety of levels:

First, everyone but the editor is a volunteer, yet we’ve received both national and international journalism awards.

Second, the quality of our content is wildly inconsistent – and that’s by design. We want a broad range of voices, including professional writers, students trying to hone their skills and homeless people who lack formal training but have had the most expensive education available, the kind acquired by living on the streets.

Third, ours is a newspaper with a mission – two missions, actually. Our first mission is providing the opportunity for homeless and other low-income people to earn a small living by distributing *Streetvibes*. The vendors are the reason for the paper’s existence, as one of our volunteers reminds us whenever we seem to forget. Our second mission is advocacy journalism. *Streetvibes* is an activist newspaper, advocating justice, building community. We are here to rattle people’s consciences, to urge them to act, to make them pound the table, to prod them into asking questions – and sometimes to make them laugh. We especially like to make people laugh at Cincinnati City Council and the Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. (3CDC), two of the most ridiculous, reckless and hurtful institutions in this city – and the reason Cincinnati is thought of as a place that is cruel to poor people.

One of the reason *Streetvibes* is so odd is we’re a community paper, which means the weird, eclectic and eccentric get all jumbled in with the mainstream, minority and other elements that make Cincinnati unique – the very uniqueness that city council and 3CDC are actively trying to suppress in favor of a packaged homogeneity that just isn’t real.

Finally, ours is an odd newspaper because of you. With newspapers across the United States cutting staff, shrinking news coverage and going out of business altogether, *Streetvibes* has enjoyed dramatic growth in circulation since 2008. By supporting our vendors, you directly help to fight poverty.

As the nation prepares to celebrate Thanksgiving, I’m grateful for all the volunteers who make this feisty little street paper come together. I’m grateful for our donors. I’m grateful for our readers.

Streetvibes is an activist newspaper, advocating justice and building community. Streetvibes reports on economic issues, civil rights, the environment, the peace movement, spirituality and the struggle against homelessness and poverty. Distributed by people who are or once were homeless, in exchange for a \$1 donation, Streetvibes is published twice a month by the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless.

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The Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that works to eradicate homelessness in Cincinnati through coordination of services, public education, grassroots advocacy and *Streetvibes*.



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Beyond the bootstraps

Long-Term Success Begins with Compassion

By MARGO PIERCE/WWW.WRITERDIVA.COM
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The first time I remember taking a drink was when I was about 12 or 13 and I got a little glass of Mogen David wine at Thanksgiving to have a toast. And it was the most magical moment I'd ever had in my life. When I took that drink, it hit the back of my throat, it went down and it was like a bomb exploding inside me and it was just this warm rush feeling. What I remember from that—and it seems like it was just yesterday—for the first time in my life I felt OK. I just felt OK. I don't know another word to describe it. Everything just went whhhhheeeeww.

For the next 11 years I chased that high. That's all I ever wanted. I always wanted to feel like that, and when I wasn't doing it I was thinking about it, planning on how I was gonna get it. I don't know how fast it progressed or anything else, it's kind of hard to remember.

Michael (not his real name) looks off into the distance as he talks about being a "sober drunk" for 32 years. His voice is even, calm but not devoid of emotion. With smiles and laughter, he describes his childhood in Cincinnati, Ohio, as "typical middle class."

Alcohol—at least for people like me that I know—sets up this craving. ... I don't know how to describe it unless you've experienced it. People talk about it as being a lack of willpower. The line about willpower: The line about willpower is, "The next time you have a bad case of diarrhea, just use a little willpower on it and see how far it gets ya." You'll end up with a runny leg. It's just not that simple.

I think it's critical for anyone dealing with alcoholism that they are entitled to – if I can use that word—be told what their problem is. And I don't just mean somebody yellin' and screamin' at 'em and sayin' "You're a drunk and you better sober up." I'm talking about professional people telling them, "You have alcoholism. This is what it's doing to you. This is the only solution and this is what we think you ought to do." And help you starting some kind of plan to get sober.

It's a great mantra of every drunk, "It'll be different this time. It won't be as bad this time, I won't do 'this' this time, I won't do 'that' this time." And every time you do it over and over again. Insanity and alcoholism is absolutely doing the same thing over again and expecting different results. Every day after day after day after day.

I talk to multiple DUI offenders and I'll tell them, "Anyone can get a DUI. A social drinker can get a DUI – they have a bad night, they make a bad decision, they get into a car and they get arrested and they get a DUI. They will go to jail, they will pay the fine and they will tell themselves, 'I am never, ever, ever going to do that again, and they will never, ever do that again. And we drunks say the same vow and we'll be drinking and driving the next day.'" We just have this amazing ability to block out all the consequences. And the reason we block it out is because we're scared to death.

We're scared to death because we don't know how to *not* drink.

He says what it takes to get sober is different for each person. He describes the intervention he participated in with his mother. Michael was 10-years sober at the time.

We had Mom in the room. It was me and my brother and two sisters and this professional lady. I knew Mom was in trouble because my little sister had called me and told me what was going on. We were hitting Mom with everything we had, and she was like Superman – she was deflecting everything.

Finally my little sister said, "Mom, I know you're drinking a lot of vodka."

She got real indignant and she looked at her

and said, "How can you possibly know that?"

And Tammy (not her real name) said, "Because I see you walk into the bathroom with an empty glass, and then you come out with a full glass but I haven't heard the faucet run."

There was dead silence and Mom said, "OK." And that's all there was. That's what got to her. Her finally realizing that, yeah, people know ... if this little 8-year-old kid knows I'm doing it.

Sometimes what helps a drunk is the power of a memory.

There's different things in my life that kind of stick out. I went into a bar in downtown and I'd been working downtown at the time, went there every day and the barmaid knew us. So she started getting me something to drink. ... I always drank it in a glass. And I told her, "No, just give it to me in the can." The reason I wanted it in a can was because I knew I was shaking so bad that it was going to be really, really hard to get that glass to my lips without spillin'.

At this time I had just turned 23. When I was drinking that can I had a flashback, just a moment in time when I was 18 and sitting in this bar. A guy walked in. ... This guy was probably in his sixties. He just looked disheveled and tired and old. He got this double-double with the beer chaser and he had to put his head all the way down to the bar to get his lips on the drink so he could put it back because he was shaking so bad that if he didn't he was going to spill it.

Then he did the same thing with the beer chaser and he ordered another one. ... And after the second one he just kind of went sssssshhhheewww and he was OK then, he got a fix.

Sometimes what helps a drunk is the power of stories.

I heard a guy say one time – he lived in a cardboard box in the Bowery of New York, that's where he ended up. That was his home. And after he sobered up, he lived there for another two years.

I knew him when he was 36 or 37 years sober and he died over 50 years sober. And he said, "A lot of yi'z never made it down in the gutter with me and livin' in a box. A lot of yi'z picked the gutter up and took it home and put it in your living room for your wives and kids to live in. I din' hurt nobody livin' in that box."

Everybody has moments when we see ourselves for the way we really are—and when he said that I knew exactly what I was. And what it triggered was the thought, "Instead of being so damn full of self-pity and anger about where you're at, you ought to be a little grateful for where you didn't end up."

What every drunk needs is his pain, according to Michael.

When I was 22 booze started not doing the same thing, and that's what happens with alcoholics. There's a lot of reasons why drunks quit drinking. One of them is because it quits working – and for me, it quit working. No matter how much I drank – in search of the ever-lasting buzz – I couldn't get it no matter what happened. I woke up every morning and I was just this miserable human who was living to drink, and I could no longer even get that little buzz from when I was 13.

The old saying is first the man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes the man. That's what happened – I was drinking to live.

What brings people to their knees, for lack of a better term, to a point where they're able to get some help—if help's available to them – is they have to reach a point of pain so bad that they want to get out. They have to. So every time we rescue people – there's a difference between rescuing and helping – every time we rescue someone from their pain, we're denying them their pain, we're denying them the chance to get sober.

And the support of people willing to teach and learn is imperative.

Dad drove me to the treatment center, and this is kind of a good picture of people who don't understand alcoholism. I had a can of beer in my



hand all the way up to walking into the emergency room. My dad said, "I don't get it. You want to quit drinking and you're walking into this place with a can of beer." And I said, "Dad, if I knew how to quit drinking, I wouldn't have to go into this place."

What happened when I called this treatment center – the reason I stayed – was because I found people who knew what my problem was. Not only that they knew what my problem was, they also knew what the solution was. Before I was gonna be able to get better, number one, I had to get detoxed, I had to get off of it and I knew I couldn't do it on my own. I had been physically addicted for a long time.

I had a guy tell me one time, "If you want to learn how to be sober, you ought to hang around sober people. If you're trying to learn how to drink, I guess you hang around drinking people." So that's what I did. Out of this treatment center was a huge social organization out of all the people who were graduates of this treatment center. We did a lot of stuff together. We learned how to be sober together.

.....
The American myth of individualism tells people who are struggling with addiction, abuse, mental illness or poverty to simply pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. In reality, specially designed services and other kinds of support are essential to the process of transformation. This column one in an occasional series that will explore what it takes to Forget the Bootstraps in order to live a better life.
.....

I was basically socially stonewalled from the time I was about 14. I had absolutely no social skills whatsoever. For somebody who thinks alcohol is the best friend they've ever had in their life, then all of a sudden it gets stripped away from him. I had nothing to lean on. It was very scary, very scary.

What's totally useless is ordering alcoholics to "quit drinking so much," because they simply don't know how to do that.

I absolutely think you can pull up on all your bootstraps all you want, but until you have a solution to your problem, you're going to keep doing the same thing you've been doing because you don't know of any other way to do it.

Everything you're telling him he already knows. He already knows his drinking is a problem – he's not stupid. He knows that there's a problem. The problem is that he doesn't know what the solution is.

Don't forget a sense of humor....

Want to hear a good drunk joke? A guy walks into work one morning and he's got his arm all bandaged up and in a sling and his face is all scratched up. His buddy said, "Jesus! What happened to you?" And he said, "Man, I started drinking yesterday and decided to go horseback riding. So I get on this horse and I'm so drunk I can't sit on him. I fall off, my foot gets caught in the stirrup and he just keeps on going." And the guys said, "Man, you're really lucky. How'd you finally get off?" and he said, "My wife came out of K-Mart and unplugged him."

You gotta be able to laugh, you really do.

A version of this column, reprinted with permission, was first published in the Denver VOICE.



Despair Takes a Young Man's Life

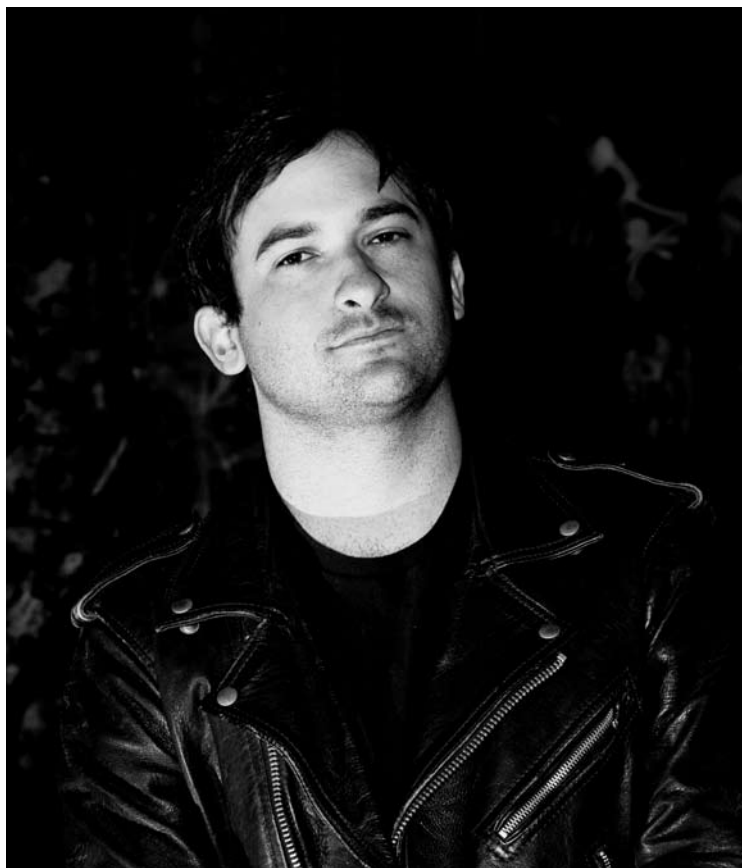
Kevin Goodreau's final warning

By JEREMY FLANNERY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Philadelphia, Penn. — An estimated 27 million Americans were taking antidepressant medications in 2005 in the United States, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. The medication works for many patients, while others suffer side effects that outweigh the benefits. For Kevin Goodreau, a medical technician and musician, the side effects were fatal.

"In November of 2009 I was under extreme stress," Goodreau said in late September. "I had a few life changing events happen. In retrospect, it was nothing that major, but thought-provoking enough to make me realize that something needed to change substantially. I did a few things on my own to help my problem. I had quit smoking for two months and started exercising regularly.

"In early January things started looking pretty good. I was optimistic about my future. I had a new sexual relationship. It had been four full years before I had any kind of physical relationship with a woman, and I was extremely excited. So, in short, I had made the resolution that 2010 was going to be the first year in a new life of self-actualization and somewhat healthy living. And I was doing a pretty good job of helping myself. Unfortunately for me, I had previously made an appointment with a psy-



Kevin Goodreau blamed medicinal side effects for destroying his life. Courtesy of *Smoker and the Rollers*.

chiatrist back in November '09. So I went to see her on or quite close to Dec. 30, 2009."

Goodreau's psychiatrist diagnosed him with mild schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, he said. She prescribed Goodreau with the antipsychotic medications Lamictal and Abilify.

"Within one week of consuming these medications I began to experience what is known as tardive dyskinesia," Goodreau said. "The symptoms were excruciating. I would find myself incapable of sitting still and would have, on numerous occasions, uncontrollable and long lasting seizure-like episodes. These symptoms were very frightening for me. But, to be honest, they pale in comparison to the devastation that the antidepres-

sant Lexapro has brought to my life."

Goodreau quit taking Lamictal and Abilify, and returned to his psychiatrist in January, he said. Goodreau requested Lexapro by name.

"I took it upon myself to quit the antipsychotics," Goodreau said. "And the side effects went away. Two weeks into January I went back to the (psychiatrist) and she prescribed the Lexapro. I was happy. It had literally, with the very first dose, begun to take effect. In fact, I remember there was a feeling like I was tripping on LSD while I took the medication. The medicine worked, and it worked well.

"I took it for only two weeks before I quit cold turkey. Within one week of using the Lexapro, I began to

notice incredible physiological changes: chronic fatigue, complete impotence, loss of libido and a lack of ability to recognize my own basic emotions. I was literally stunned."

Lexapro is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI), a prescription-only antidepressant medication used to treat major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder, according to the manufacturer. Fatigue, insomnia, decreased libido and anorgasmia (difficulty achieving orgasm) are among the side effects listed on Lexapro's label.

Goodreau insisted that Lexapro had physically damaged his nervous system, and he thought the side effects he was suffering with were irreversible. Those side effects from the medication affected Goodreau for the rest of the nine months in his life. He chose to end his life at age 28 on Oct. 20, 2010 because he thought he would never be a whole person again. Goodreau left behind a suicide note to explain his decision.

"I love life (friends, family, doing stuff) very much ... and this has been very hard on everyone," he wrote. "I cannot express how sorry I am about this decision. I am too scared to live a life in impotence and disability. And you can't help me with that. I will not forfeit the life that should have been for the one where I live in my parents' basement in shame and weakness.

"It is very important to have someone that you can love and who loves you back, on real human terms. I had that once, so my life was not meaningless. But I cannot

feel that feeling anymore. Whatsoever happened to my brain is not my fault. It is the Lexapro. I will not concede this fact to the simplicity of ignorance and the 'you're just depressed' argument. My dick doesn't work anymore. I have no libido. I can barely remember why I liked things like music. ... Do not let them convince you that this is just depression. That is the easy way out of trying to understand a real problem. These drugs are the problem. End of the story."

Goodreau hoped his story would warn others about the risks of antidepressant medications.

"There was a very real feeling that something had permanently changed within my nervous system," Goodreau said in an interview. "The sexual symptoms are terrible, but the core of this disease called PSSD (post-SSRI sexual dysfunction) is something far more frightening. It is difficult to describe if you don't experience it. I believe the answer lies in widespread neurological damage which, most likely, cannot be reversed.

"I am more than willing to share with anyone the reality of PSSD. Many people don't even realize that the drugs are the problem. If I can help people to understand the truth behind the psychiatric death machine while preventing them from undergoing a lifetime of needless suffering, I would be somewhat happy. I would like to work with my support group called SSRIsex@yahoo.com to get the word out as much as possible."

"Feed Me, Seymour, Feed Me All Night Long..."

By JENI JENKINS

Autumn Squash Casserole

Trying to find a tasty way to enjoy that summer squash? This recipe I threw together to take to a weekly neighborhood potluck. I was trying to find a creative way to get some more vegetables into the mix, and this was definitely a crowd pleaser. Enjoy!

Serving Size: 4-5 bellies

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 yellow squash, diced in large chunks
2 zucchini squash, diced in large chunks
1 medium yellow or white onion, chopped
3 cloves fresh garlic, diced
2 tablespoons butter or butter substitute for vegans
2 packages crushed Ritz (butter) crackers
Salt and pepper (Optional for vegans)
1 cup shredded Parmesan cheese

Heat oven to 350 degrees

- Sauté squash in olive oil over medium high heat for 5-7 minutes. Pour squash in 9"x12" baking dish.
- Sauté onion and garlic in butter over medium heat for 3-5 minutes, remove from heat.
- Mix the onion/garlic mixture with the crushed crackers and Parmesan cheese.
- Evenly pour the mixture over the top of the squash as a cracker topping.
- Bake uncovered in oven for 15-20 minutes or until cracker topping is browned

Voila, FEED!



Domestic Violence in High Office

A blemish on a record of women's rights

By Joseph Opio

It was the soap opera that gripped an entire nation. A distinguished engineer, challenging his wife's divorce petition, argued that he had "slapped her only twice, for insubordination." On the face of it, it seemed like your average case of an abusive husband justifying wife battery. Problem is, the wife in question was none other than Specioza Wandira Kazibwe, Uganda's vice president at the time.

Kazibwe had shot to global prominence in 1994 when President Yoweri Museveni had named her to the second most powerful office in the land. Kazibwe's new position had made her the first-ever female vice president in Africa. It also earned Uganda universal acclaim for its pro-women politics.

became a source of national embarrassment.

Some congratulated her for speaking out against domestic violence. But others criticized Kazibwe, a surgeon and mother of five, for "encouraging rebelliousness in marriages."

One cabinet colleague of Kazibwe's was later quoted arguing that the entire matter illustrated why women are ill suited for politics in the first place.

To women activists, it was sufficient evidence that Kazibwe's elevation to the vice-presidency had all been a cosmetic service to the cause of women's emancipation.

"When Kazibwe became vice-president, we all celebrated the dawn of a new era," said Sylvia Tamale, a leading law professor at Makerere University. "But after she confessed that her husband had been battering her all along, it proves that women

and vocal opponent of the Domestic Relations Bill, even went on record to brand it "a conspiracy on the part of single and highly learned women to take over the country."

The failure to convert the Domestic Relations Bill into law thus far remains the sole blemish on Uganda's otherwise immaculate crusade to promote gender equality and empower its women.

It's a crusade that was initiated and spearheaded by president Museveni long before the UN signed its Millennium Declaration in September 2000. Kazibwe's elevation was Museveni's most celebrated "affirmative act" but it has not been the only one.

The president's pro-women policies have seen women gain positions of influence in public office and increased girls' access to education and economic opportunities.

Women now form 40 percent of Parliament, up from 18 percent in 1993, according to statistics from the Ministry of Gender. There are also eight women in the 24-member cabinet.

Elsewhere, women occupy top-most positions at the Uganda Revenue Authority, the Uganda Human Rights Commission, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament and the deputy heads of the Judiciary, Civil Service and Electoral Commission.

Such gains are expected to be consolidated, thanks to the government's twin policies of Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education. Both policies put special emphasis on girls; and with such free education, families have been weaned off the age-old practice whereby scarce financial resources were spent educating boys while the girls got married off instead.

As a result, Ministry of Education figures have shown that the number of girls is equal to that of boys all the way through primary and secondary school. Statistics of girls accessing university education have also spiked, inspired in no small part by the government's affirmative decision back in 1990 to grant 1.5 bonus points to female applicants. The proportion of female students has since risen from about 20 percent to 35 percent in 1998 and to 51 percent in 2008.

Not that women's rights crusaders are resting on their laurels. The failure to pass the Domestic Relations Bill remains a thorny issue, as does the nonexistence of an Equal Opportunities Commission. Article 32 (2) of the 1995 Ugandan Constitution committed Parliament to make laws for the establishment of such a commission, a brief that remains unfulfilled.

Tamale argues that the absence of the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Domestic Relations Bill failure betray a strategic lack of political will, lamenting that "women are in positions of power without power."

Tamale is among the top decision-makers at Uganda's leading university. But her concerns aren't entirely elitist, as her detractors have been known to claim. At the zenith of Kazibwe's divorce, radio phone-in debates were flooded by ordinary women who expressed concerns and deep-seated fears about their own positions "in a country where the nation's highest-ranking woman could be so flagrantly abused by her own husband."

And unless Uganda promulgates a domestic-relations law between now and 2015, such concerns are bound to remain, ensuring that despite its sparkling successes in all other spheres of women empowerment, Uganda will still have fallen painfully short of achieving this particular goal.

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Vice President Specioza Wandira Kazibwe shocked Uganda by revealing she was a victim of domestic violence. Joseph Opio.

Married to a successful engineer, Kazibwe was perceived as an inspiration for women, her stint as vice president marked by her relentless promotion of women's rights. Yet in 2002 a nation was shocked when Kazibwe confessed that she was seeking divorce from her husband. She cited an abusive marriage and infidelity as her reasons.

"Enough is enough," Kazibwe told a gathering on International Women's Day. "How can you beat a whole vice president? I'm very sorry."

Kazibwe's confession might have been inspired by the theme for that year's celebrations, which was "Break The Silence. Stop Domestic Violence." But it triggered mass consternation.

Charles Kazibwe, it turned out, had routinely battered his wife of 28 years, philandered and fathered two children by another woman. That a woman so powerful had been trapped in the sort of abusive marriage that's so common all over Uganda was shocking enough. That a woman so powerful had proved so powerless in her own household throughout her entire vice-presidency

can't be emancipated fully unless they are liberated in all aspects of life. It's no use emancipating a woman in public yet she remains at the mercy of an abusive husband at home."

Kazibwe's predicament inspired women activists to renew their fight to have a law regulating domestic relations.

"Kazibwe was the example," says Jackie Asimwe of the Uganda Women's Network, an NGO crusading to promote women's rights. "She was a powerful vice president, but in private her husband was hitting her."

But although the Domestic Relations Bill was drafted over 10 years ago, it still is yet to be passed into law. The bill aims to outlaw marital rape, ease divorce for women, grant property rights to wives and regulate polygamy. Sadly, it has been opposed at each and every turn by conservatives and religious leaders fearful that "it will grant women so many rights and lead to the disintegration of families and African family values."

Nsubuga Nsambu, a senior parliamentarian

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On the Left Side of God

Continued from page 1

own request after CCHD tried to censor its newspaper. Women in Transition in Louisville, Ky., had its grant rescinded, and Preble Resource Center, which serves homeless youths in Portland, Maine, was ordered to return to CCHD funds for its Homeless Voices for Justice program. In Oregon, Children First for Oregon, a child advocacy group for vulnerable children, was culled from the list of grantees earlier this year.

Besides CCHD's support, and beyond the commonality of their missions, these groups share something else: They were all targeted, investigated and determined unfit by a campaign of Catholic conservative groups that, via the prolific capacity of the Internet, have formed a nationwide coalition calling for the defunding of more than 50 poverty-alleviation organizations, and a radical overhaul – and even disbandment – of CCHD.

To date, 10 U.S. bishops, an unprecedented number by Catholic news reports, have publicly suspended their annual, mandatory collection among parishioners for CCHD because of claims that CCHD funded “anti-Catholic” organizations. The allegations by the group Reform CCHD Now against grantees begin as crimes against the Catholic Church for supporting abortion and gay-rights issues and extend to direct attacks on community organizing and social empowerment. It could be dismissed as a fringe element, if not for the use of the campaign by politically vested parties to discredit, disrupt and defund the work of community organizing groups long-supported and heralded by U.S. bishops.

This year Catholic Campaign for Human Development celebrated 40 years of funding community programs that address the root causes of homelessness and poverty. Nationwide, it has distributed more than \$400 million in self-help grants to 8,000 agencies across the United States, making it the nation's largest private funder of self-help groups for the poor.

CCHD is a rarity in the world of charitable investment in that it does not fund direct services like its faith-based counterparts, Catholic Charities or St. Vincent DePaul. Instead, recipients of CCHD's grants are organizations that work to foster systemic change through partnering with common-cause groups and community organizing. Because of its role in community organizing projects, the Portland Archdiocese is considered a core funder of poverty-alleviation and empowerment projects in Oregon and a voice among faith-based efforts to shape policy around social-service needs in Multnomah County.

The attacks by Reform CCHD Now and its followers are prompting a “review and renewal” process by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. What the bishops decide could have major consequences for the thousands of cash-strapped nonprofits that CCHD supports, and the millions of poor and disenfranchised people who rely on these programs that today serve as proxy to government initiatives.

‘Eternal vigilance’

In summer 2009, the Texas-based Bellarmine Veritas Ministry, an opaque “Catholic grassroots organizing ministry” traceable to one man, Rob Gasper, released an investigation into recipients of CCHD's grants. This June the Virginia-based American Life League released a report echoing Bellarmine's conclusions: that CCHD was funding what it called “anti-Catholic organizations” based upon the organizations' actions and the actions of their partners and affiliates. These groups called on parishioners to boycott their donations to CCHD until the bishops revise the granting oversight. The groups specifically target 50 organizations they are demanding the CCHD stops funding.

These reports surfaced during the thick of the health-care reform debate, a flagship in President Obama's agenda, which the bishops opposed over abortion issues. In fact, the reformers singled out the bill and demanded that any grantees that supported the health care reform legislation “must state clearly and publicly that they will not promote any piece of legislation which gives federal support to abortion or family planning.”

Bellarmino, American Life League and Human Life International, also based in Virginia, are the three primary organizations behind Reform CCHD Now, although Reform CCHD Now claims more than 20 organizations working on behalf of the nationwide campaign. These three groups have driven the reform movement to viral levels online with blogs and video and through the multitude of online Catholic and pro-life news services, including LifeNews.com and LifeSiteNews.com.

“We started forming the coalition when we found

very anti-Catholic things being funded by Catholics,” says Stephen Phelan, communications manager with Human Life International. “Michael Hitchborn (with American Life League) wanted to meet and they refused, and Bellarmine also tried and didn't get a response. So everybody went public with it.”

“Because of the Internet, we've been able to get the information out to much more people in a much shorter period of time,” says Michael Hitchborn, a researcher with the pro-life organization American Life League. “Which is why the CCHD is finding it much harder to hide with their tactics they've been using.”

Those tactics, according to Hitchborn, are to fund groups that do not conform to Catholic teaching, deny that they are “anti-Catholic” groups and then continue funding with the complications essentially swept under the rug. Many of the organizations already defunded this past year were longtime recipients of CCHD funding, and praised for their work in building cross-community partnerships and networks to fight the causes of poverty. However, it's those partnerships that factor into nearly all of the groups singled out by the reform movement. In fact, more than 30 groups reformers want defunded are listed because they are members of the Center for Community Change, a D.C.-based cross-community organizing movement that stopped receiving CCHD funding in 2001.

“That's a problem because there's no accountability,” Hitchborn says. “The groups that are receiving CCHD money are getting trained by (Center for Community Change), which means they are being trained in cross-issues advocacy. And that's a problem. So what we called for is an immediate disassociation from (Center for Community Change) for any group receiving CCHD money.”

Hitchborn says he will continue investigating organizations to weed out the recipients of CCHD's grants and says he's working on a new report for release soon.

“Because of the long history of CCHD funding errant organizations, there's no way that we could let up,” Hitchborn says. “Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. And if we are going to make sure that an organization that claims to be Catholic remains Catholic, they need to adhere to Catholic teaching.”

Subhead: ‘We didn't even do anything wrong’

For nearly four decades the San Francisco-based Chinese Progressive Association organized the Chinese and Asian immigrant community, including thousands of restaurant workers who received less than minimum wage or were living in the margins. With the support of CCHD, the organization engaged workers to successfully raise San Francisco's minimum wage from \$6.75 to \$8.50, and in 2006, helped lead the charge for all workers in the city to receive paid sick leave. This work, along with its housing program, youths and environmental justice work, and its workers center, was funded by CCHD for years. But by September the local CCHD said the relationship was over. It was pulling the plug on \$30,000 it had granted to the organization's worker center.

“They called me and they said they needed to talk,” says Alex T. Tom, the Chinese Progressive Association's executive director, “that people were getting ready for the bishops meeting in the fall and they were fanning the flames and pushing CCHD to resolve the issue.”

The issue was the Association's publication of a voter pamphlet that opposed California's Propositions 8 and 4, which banned same-sex marriages and required parental notification for some abortions. It was an effort that had nothing to do with the CCHD's funding, which was specifically allocated for the organization's Worker Center.

“It was right when the economic crisis happened,” Tom says. “It was really poor form, poor taste and very bad timing when they decided to revoke the funding.”

“In general, worker centers don't have the easiest time. Anti-poverty work is not something that is heavily supported. It helped us build a movement. And now we have to find a consistent revenue stream that doesn't rely on support that we used to receive from CCHD.”

Preble Street in Portland, Maine, received CCHD grants for 13 years for its work in empowering the homeless, most recently a \$30,000 grant in 2009. However, it was defunded at the end of 2009 and asked to return unspent grant money to CCHD because the organization joined the campaign against a measure to overturn the state's same-sex marriage law. For Preble Street, it was an extension of their advocacy for rights and opportunities for the homeless youths within the GBLT the organization cares for and supports. The CCHD grant, however, actually was awarded to Preble Street's project called Home-

less Voices for Justice, which works for social change on behalf of – and with the leadership of – people in poverty and homelessness. Homeless Voices did not participate in the campaign on the law. However, as Homeless Voices' fiscal agent, Preble Street was called to return funding, and did so with a \$2,400 check. In a letter to CCHD Director Ralph McCloud, Preble Street Executive Director Mark Swann defended his group's position:

“Throughout our history, when Preble Street and Homeless Voices for Justice have taken differing positions, there has never been any effort to force or stifle the opinion of the other. Indeed, regardless of Preble Street's point of view, we have chosen to facilitate the expressions of opposing positions such as those of (Homeless Voices) by the support we offer them – embodying the principles of CCHD social justice teachings.

“Punishing Homeless Voices by demanding the return of much-needed funds because of Preble Street's advocacy around issues of social justice is deeply troubling,” Swann wrote. “It is unfortunate that the CCHD and the local diocese is choosing not to be part of these important efforts.”

Women in Transition in Louisville, Ky., is but a shadow of its former self after CCHD rescinded a \$25,000 grant at the end of 2009. Women in Transition runs skill-building programs for at-risk women and organizes on issues of affordable housing and health care. CCHD was a sponsor of the organization since 2005, until this past year when it received a letter from someone pointing out Women in Transition's relationship with Wench Self-Care Collective, a local women's health organization. Wench is pro-choice, and has helped escort women to and from the city's abortion clinic, but it also focuses on women's nutrition and education around healthy eating habits, which is where Women in Transition and Wench crossed paths. Women in Transition says it never worked with Wench on reproductive rights, just healthy eating, cooking classes and health fairs.

Khalilah Collins, Women in Transition's executive director, says her organization had received CCHD grants for \$20,000 and \$25,000 each year since 2005. The 2009 fall grant for \$25,000 had been approved and the check in the hands of their fiscal sponsor, Catholic Charities, but it was never delivered. Collins says she was told by Catholic Charities that unless she signed a letter saying that her organization regretted the situation and would not work with the Wench group or any other group whose mission contradicted Catholic teaching, the money was in jeopardy. It was more than a third of the organization's budget, and money they had counted on.

“The more I thought about it, the more upset I got,” Collins says. “We didn't even do anything wrong.”

(Collins says there were also questions about the agency's 501(c)3 status, but that had not disrupted funding before.)

Collins didn't write the letter.

“I felt that our integrity was questioned as an organization, and all we have is our integrity and our voice, and you're questioning that,” she says. “We can't be a part of that.”

Collins says she never knew who wrote the letter about Wench, and that the relationship is not even traceable through Women in Transition's website. However, by November, just before the 2009 collection for CCHD, Women in Transition and others were singled out in a press release by the American Life League and others within Reform CCHD Now for ties to Planned Parenthood, which led a workshop at an event the organization-co-sponsored with Spalding University.

“It's not about WIT and Wench,” Collins says. “We've never done any work on choice at all. We steer clear of that number one thing because we know we could lose our funding.”

But the funding is gone.

“We have no money right now. None. I didn't get paid last week, the rent hasn't been paid, because we're out of money,” Collins says.

Subhead: ‘It's taking away care from those who need it’

“These are politically motivated attacks,” says Chris Korzen, executive director of D.C.-based Catholics United, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization doing online advocacy and education programs around the Catholic Social Tradition. “And they fit into this broader narrative that we're unfortunately seeing in our system now, where social change is limited to charity and not actually fixing social structures that cause poverty and other problems.”

The intent of these attacks, Korzen says, is to demonize community organizing behind the argu-

Continued from page 6

ments against abortion and same-sex marriage.

“That’s the end result of what this campaign is doing,” Korzen says. “It’s taking away care from those who need it.”

Korzen, a Catholic, says Catholic social teaching is being hijacked by political agendas.

“This hyper-individualism that some are pushing in a political context does not have a lot of support in Catholic social teaching,” Korzen says. “So essentially what we’re seeing is groups who are using Catholic teaching to promote what really is a secular agenda.”

It’s not a new thing, Korzen says. Indeed, CCHD for decades has had its critics. But today it gets the added boost of leveraging political gains with a galvanized voting block, further inflamed by the personalities parading through our ever-expanding media options.

“For sure, we’ve seen a movement to the right in Catholic institutional settings, and I’d even go as far to say there are some elements of the Catholic institutions and some parts of the (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) that have essentially been taken over by the Republican Party. That sounds like a strong statement, but it’s the truth. Over the years the conservative movement has worked very hard to cultivate support in the Catholic churches.”

Case in point, Korzen says, is the U.S. bishops’ opposition to the health-care reform bill, which was singled out as a defundable offense by the reformers, “even though the Catholic Church believes that health care is a human right,” Korzen says. “That never would have happened in the 1980s.”

In response to the reformers’ investigations and allegations, bishops across the country have issued statements in defense of CCHD’s operations, including Archbishop John Vlazny of the Portland Diocese. Vlazny wrote on the issue in the Catholic Sentinel in late 2009, prior to Street Roots being defunded.

“Once again this year objections have been raised to the Campaign because some CCHD-funded groups have taken actions in conflict with CCHD guidelines after they were funded,” Vlazny writes. “... When the facts were confirmed, the groups were defunded. Other allegations were raised, but the charges proved to be inaccurate or a misunderstanding had occurred. Mistakes are made, they are quickly corrected. But the negative voices drone on, and I suspect their problems are more political than religious.”

Ralph McCloud, the executive director of CCHD based in Washington D.C., says CCHD isn’t beholden to the partisan arguments behind the attacks.

“We go to where poor people are, where nobody else wants to go, to let them speak boldly. I think we’re somewhere boldly embedded between the right and the left, and neither one of them can have a claim on it,” he says.

McCloud says he cannot go into details on the upcoming review and renewal of CCHD, which will be conducted by the bishops, but that it will look at ways CCHD’s funding process can be more “responsive to the needs of the contemporary current realities,” he says.

“I think where it gets murky sometimes is when people are in coalitions with a group where their main focus is somewhere else,” McCloud says. “That’s one of the things hoping to come out of the review and renewal process. We’re securing assistance from folks who are theologians and ethicists to find where the line is so we’re not arbitrary in our decisions.”

Just as the reform campaign proliferated on the blogosphere last summer, Matt Cato was hired to head the Portland Archdiocese Office of Justice and Peace, which administers the local CCHD funding process. With his appointment in August 2009, the office merged with the archdiocese’s Respect Life Activities Office. By early December, CCHD informed Children First for Oregon that it would not be considered for future grants because of its 2006 opposition of a measure to require parental notification for minors seeking abortion. Cato said Children First has the support of the Archdiocese, but that the group could not receive CCHD funds.

Children’s First advocates on behalf of children in foster care, living in poverty, those who need health care and those suffering from abuse or neglect.

Children First declined to talk on the record about the situation, but Cato said it could not longer be funded by CCHD because of its opposition to the measure, even in cases of incest or abuse.

“The bishops do not recognize any exception to abortion,” Cato says.

Those are doctrinal objections for the Catholic Church. Cato says he has no contact with the groups attacking CCHD, but that he is familiar with the more political ideologies behind their motivation.

“I’m not speaking for these organizations, but I do know that plenty of people are uncomfortable

when a group of low-income or poor persons have power,” Cato says. “So you have the power of money, which corporations have, and you have the power of people, which is what community organizing is. The power of people which needs to balance the power of money, and that’s what community organizing is about, and a lot of people are uncomfortable with the poor having the voice.”

Subhead: ‘I’m not attacking social justice’

Stephen Phelan, communications manager with Human Life International, denies any political agenda to the reform movement.

“It’s easy to confuse what we’re saying with a political message,” he says “We’re not out to get anybody. We want to see real Catholic teaching take hold.”

Phelan says that what has changed, from groups receiving years of funding from CCHD to being considered inappropriate and defunded, is the political backdrop.

“I think when (CCHD) first started, it made more sense for Catholics to align with the more liberal (groups),” Phelan says. “The Democratic side of the coin was doing good work back then. It wasn’t all these other things - anti-marriage, abortion, and Marxism. So what’s happened in the last 40 years is the same groups that were once pretty cool to work with have gotten more radically political, and the CCHD has continued to work with them, and been opposed to the church on a lot of these issues. After a couple of decades, it’s like, really? What are you guys thinking?”

Regardless of Phelan’s intentions or viewpoint, the criticism and condemnation of CCHD has for decades been framed by politics. In the 1980s and ’90s, former political appointees from the Nixon and Reagan administrations painted CCHD as a political arm of the liberal agenda. One appointee distributed a paper saying CCHD used Catholic money to prop up “leftist political activists plotting to destroy our economic system” and told Catholics to instead give their money to direct services. Others have said CCHD promotes a “political agenda far to the left of mainstream America.” Repeated attacks conclude that people should not give money to CCHD because its mission is not charity, but rather social justice.

“I have gotten a lot of feedback from people who are both excited and angry about the research that I’ve done,” American Life League’s Hitchborn says. “It’s interesting. The people who write me that are angry say I can’t believe that you are arguing against the bishops. They don’t address the concerns. They say, ‘Why are you doing this? Why are you attacking social justice?’ I’m not attacking social justice.”

A more recent voice to the opposition to CCHD has been Deal W. Hudson, the former director of Catholic outreach for George W. Bush’s 2000 and 2004 campaigns, and now the director of InsideCatholic.com. He has advanced the Reform CCHD Now, citing its defunding campaign in his writings online, and added among those to be defunded the attendees to the U.S. Social Forum 2010 that included workshops on reproductive and gay rights.

“One criticism leveled at the CCHD Reform Now research is that it was alleging ‘guilt by association.’ But that misses the point completely,” Hudson writes. “The presence of 21 CCHD grantees at U.S. Social Forum isn’t problematic because grantees are keeping company with the wrong people, but because they’re actively participating in a forum designed ‘to set a national action agenda.’ Looking at the program, it’s safe to assume that the agenda includes the right to abortion and gay marriage, as well as a larger ideological commitment to various forms of Marxism – an ideology condemned by the Catholic Church.”

The Catholic Media Coalition, another Catholic news source, for years has pushed to revamp CCHD, and calls for Catholics to boycott giving money to the charity because “the good groups funded by CCHD are not sufficient to balance the many evil groups supported, groups working for socialism by electing liberal politicians. CCHD helped to give us the radical, left-wing Congress we have today.”

Compare that to celebrity pundit Glenn Beck, who told followers earlier this year that that if they find the words “social justice” or “economic justice” on their church website, to “run as fast as you can.”

“Social justice and economic justice, they are code words. Now, am I advising people to leave their church? Yes! ... If you have a priest that is pushing social justice, go find another parish,” Beck said.

“One of the effects of this, too, is essentially these folks are saying to a new generation of Catholics who still believe in social justice that you’re not welcome here anymore,” Korzen says. “It” going to shift demographics, where folks who still believe in social justice are just not considering themselves Catholic anymore. I saw that growing up as an altar boy in Rhode Island. From the perspective of the Catholic community, which should be a diverse community across racial and cultural lines; I don’t want to be a part of a church that builds itself as an exclusive club.

It’s damaging to the church, as is any attempts to use Catholic teaching as a political battering ram. And we just see more of that every day.”

Subhead: ‘You’ve got to draw a line’

Matt Cato with the Portland Archdiocese office of Justice and Peace and Respect for Life, says that the reform movement’s attacks on CCHD have not changed how they consider grantees. However, Cato says he has added a line to the local CCHD grant application.

“We still look at the same criteria,” he says. “It’s always been on the application do you act in accordance of the teachings of the Catholic Church. I just added to that, ‘Can you tell me the ballot measures that you or your executive director has supported in the last five years?’ That was an easy one to have missed. It’s usually not on someone’s Web site.”

The decision came after learning of Children First For Oregon’s position on Measure 43.

Still, Cato maintains that there are differences between material and proximate relationships between organizations that would determine if a group is eligible for funding.

“There’s a point where you’ve got to draw a line. Just because the organization does this here or is associated with another organization, it doesn’t mean this organization is tainted,” Cato says.

Planned Parenthood, however, is the exception.

Since 2005 Street Roots has received \$40,000 from CCHD for the newspaper, the Rose City Resource guide and for the eastside expansion to open a remote office for vendors. In all those years Planned Parenthood has been a part of its listings (prior to 2008, the Rose City Resource was included as a part of the newspaper). Likewise, Street Roots has always included information on organizations helping at-risk gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual youths and adults. Planned Parenthood is a “nuclear” red flag in the Catholic Church, Cato says. It is simply too hot to handle.

“I’m not going to tell you how to run your business. You guys do great work,” he says. “You make the decision in future resource guides to include that information or not, and if you include (Planned Parenthood), we can’t give you a CCHD grant.”

Cato says there is room for working together, regardless of whether CCHD is funding a program.

“Jesus had dinner with the tax collectors, prostitutes and sinners,” he says. “You just can’t completely separate your self with those you completely disagree with. As Catholics, we’re called to evangelize, not preach to the choir.”

(Street Roots has not been asked to return any funding from CCHD)

“It’s disturbing that a small group of right-wing fringe elements within the Catholic Church are being successful at undermining the Catholic Campaign for Human Development’s work to address the root causes of poverty through promotion and support of community-controlled, self-help organizations and through transformative education,” says Street Roots Executive Director Israel Bayer.

“At the end of the day, a witch hunt is a witch hunt, and that’s exactly what Street Roots and dozens of community organizations working to fight poverty in the United States are facing, a witch hunt born out of fear and intolerance. And let’s be clear, this is far from over. Every group that currently receives funds from CCHD is being asked to not take part in activities, or align themselves with the very groups it will take to dismantle poverty in this country. In our case, the very tool is the Rose City Resource guide. The guide gives people experiencing homelessness and poverty a chance to become their own advocates through education, and now it’s being used against us because we have chosen to deliver to people, without judgment, the resources that are available to them in our community.

“Saying that, we’re not defeated,” Bayer says. “Maybe it was a blessing in disguise that one of the groups defunded in this fiasco was a community newspaper like Street Roots that takes its journalism seriously enough to tell the whole story, and get it out to the broader public for a larger debate.”

For years the Catholic Campaign for Human Development supported the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, ACORN. However allegations against various ACORN franchises in 2008 and 2009 turned the nationwide community-organizing group into a pariah, and CCHD cut off all funding for ACORN organizations, locally and nationally. ACORN was recently acquitted in New York of any wrongdoing surrounding the pimp/prostitution videotape scandal, the most salacious accusations against an ACORN franchise.

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Confronting the School for Terrorists

Thousands killed with U.S. help

By JANICE SEVRE-DUSZYNSKA
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

November is an important month for people of faith who observe Nov. 1 as All Saints Day and Nov. 2 as All Souls Day. November is also an important month for the grassroots effort to challenge our government to realign its priorities to the needs of the people: Reduce the \$864 billion now spent annually for the U.S. military budget and the 1,500 U.S. military bases throughout the world.

November is a busy month for those with peace and justice ministries. The weekend before Thanksgiving, Nov. 18-21, thousands of people of all ages and walks of life from across the country and world will gather at the gates of Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga.

The annual witness is a transformational experience as we chant a litany of our Latin American brother and sister saints: the infants, toddlers, children, teenagers, the mothers and fathers, grandmas and grandpas who were slaughtered during the El Mozote massacre by those trained at the U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA). Holding high our white crosses, which stand for the life and death of another human being, we remember them as we sing "Presente." We recognize the blood on our own hands and join in solidarity to vigil in prayer, witness by our presence and do nonviolent civil disobedience to close this school for terrorists in our own backyard.

'Theft from the poor'

As of February, 322 acts of nonviolent civil disobedience have been committed by U.S. citizens to close the SOA. So far 297 people have served a total of 98.5 years in prison for "crossing the line at Fort Benning." First-timers have been sentenced to three months in federal prison and fined. The second time it's six months and a steeper fine. Activists have also served a total of 53.5 years of probation and home confinement.

"The SOA is a symbol of death and suffering," says the Rev. Roy Bourgeois, a Maryknoll priest of 38 years, former U.S. Naval Officer during the Vietnam War and Purple Heart recipient. "The school should not exist. It is a scandal, a theft from the poor. The millions of dollars of our taxpayer money to run the school should be directed to our schools for children."

In 1990 Bourgeois founded the School of the Americas Watch. He had worked with the poor in Bolivia for five years. There he learned how U.S. foreign policy supported military dictators in Latin America who have protected the interests of the wealthy and multinational global corporations – at the expense of the poor. He barely escaped the country with his life.

This year is the 30th anniversary of modern-day saints and martyrs: Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, who was gunned down while presiding at Mass; the beatings, rapes and killings of the four American churchwomen in El Salvador, Maryknoll sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel of Cleveland and lay missionary Jean Donovan. It is also the fifth anniversary of the vicious murder in Amazonian Brazil of Dorothy Stang of Dayton, a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Ford and Clarke were friends of Bourgeois.

"These women and Romero are such an inspiration to people of faith," he says. "Adding to the pain of their deaths, it hurts even more to know that the guns used to kill them were given by the U.S. and that those responsible for their killings were trained by the SOA."

In many ways Romero and the women represent the thousands upon thousands of innocents – unnamed saints and martyrs we will never know, yet who are remembered as we vigil on Fort Ben-

ning Road.

The School of the Americas (in 2001 renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation) has trained over 65,000 Latin American soldiers. These graduates have consistently used their skills to wage a war against their own people. Among those targeted by SOA graduates are educators, union organizers, religious workers, student leaders and others who work for the rights of the poor. The cost to U.S. taxpayers: millions of dollars. In 2000 alone the figure was more than \$22 million.

"There is an atrocious history of colonialism, slavery, war, racism and exploitation in the Americas," Bourgeois says. "Five hundred years ago, colonial powers depended on the brutal military repression of the conquistadors to exploit the wealth of Latin America. The conquest continues today as the region's highly profitable natural resources are extracted by multinational corporations with little or no benefit returning to the people in the surrounding communities. And, as in the colonial era, military force is still used to control the people of Latin America."

Examples abound. They include Columbia, Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicara-

in Bogota, Pope Paul VI made the first papal visit to the New World and addressed the landowning audience, calling them to conversion:

"What can I say to you, men of the ruling class?" he said. "What is required of you is generosity. This means the ability to detach yourselves from the stability of your position, which is a position of privilege, in order to serve those who need your worth, your culture, your authority ...

"You, lords of this world and sons of the Church, you must have the genius for virtue that society requires. Your ears and your hearts must be sensitive to the voices crying out for bread, concern, justice and a more active participation in the direction of society."

In their final message, the bishops activated a "Church of the Poor," committed to social justice in Latin American communities: "In many places in Latin America there exists a situation of injustice that must be recognized as institutional violence, because the existing structures violate people's basic rights: a situation which calls for far-reaching, daring, urgent and profoundly innovative change."

The gathering at Medellin gave rise to a "Theology of Liberation." In base communities, campesinos



SOA Watch has been calling for the closing of the school of Americas for the past 20 years.
Robert Pohowsky.

gua and El Salvador.

'Lords of this world'

During the 1980-1992 conflict in El Salvador, more than 75,000 peasant campesinos were tortured, mutilated and assassinated by the armed forces funded by the United States government. Under presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, the U.S. government's foreign policy spent millions of dollars to supply weapons to the brutal Salvadoran military, which protected the few rich and powerful landowners at the expense of the majority of the peasants. The latter were labeled "communists" by the wealthy ruling class because they sought agrarian and economic reform. The people were led by Jesuit priests who abandoned their comfortable lives as intellectuals and went into the countryside to share the lives of the peasants. The first to do so was Rutilio Grande, a Salvadoran Jesuit whose life was altered by the Conference of Medellin.

The bishops of Latin America gathered in Medellin, Columbia, in 1968 and did a dramatic turnaround. For centuries they had supported the unjust and deplorable status quo – which included the conquest and enslavement of the Indians. At Medellin, they changed their loyalty from oppressor to the oppressed. As the conference opened

nos studied Scriptures to help them name their suffering and oppression and to connect the deaths of their children from hunger with economic injustice.

Ana Carrigan described the situation in *Salvador Witness: The Life and Calling of Jean Donovan*.

"Priests who spoke out for the poor were tortured and brutally murdered," she wrote. "When Oscar Romero was appointed archbishop and head of the Salvadoran Church, those in power believed the triple alliance of the rich, the military and the Church would return. Romero was perceived as a timid man and a traditionalist. However, as one after another of his priests were murdered, he underwent a conversion. When the body of his priest friend, Rutilio Grande, was found, he excommunicated the killers and held a funeral Mass in the Metropolitan Cathedral for the first Salvadoran martyr. A bond and a solidarity evolved between the peasants and their church and their new national leader, whom they called Monsignor."

'Kingdom of violence'

"These days I have to walk the roads gathering up dead friends, listening to the anguish of

Blankets, Water and Other Bad Ideas

Continued from page 1
is about.”

But homeless camps are not the place to “see what homelessness is about,” according to homeless advocates, who point out that the great majority of homeless people don’t live outdoors. They stay in shelters or double up with family or friends.

Moreover, some advocates for homeless people are uncomfortable with the religious thrust of this kind of volunteering. But Annette Melk, who organized the Oct. 9 cleanup, said her group doesn’t push religion on homeless people.

“We build personal relationships with the homeless, encourage them and build friendships with them,” she said. “We don’t push church on them. If they want to pray with us, we pray with them.”

John 15:12 Ministries visits homeless camps to provide rides to church for those who want to attend. The volunteers provide a variety of other services as well.

“John 15:12 Ministries is heavily involved with the homeless,” Melk said. “Our founder is down at the homeless camps several times a week. We do water runs numerous times a week, and they give us the jugs back. We take firewood in winter. Someone just donated 72 blankets. I just got off the phone with a guy who has 12 tents.”

That is the problem, according to some people who work to get homeless people out of camps and into treatment and housing. While firewood and blankets have obvious benefits for people living outdoors, what’s really needed is housing. Some homeless people have addictions, and others have mental illnesses. If they are comfortable outside, the argument goes, the incentive to get treatment and housing might be lessened.

“I want people to continue helping,” says Lea Drury, an outreach worker with Lighthouse youth Services. “However, there is a fine line between helping and enabling, and we all need to work toward being on the same page.”

Lighthouse, Programs to Assist in the Transition from Homelessness (PATH) and other programs in Cincinnati send trained outreach workers to find people staying outdoors and connect them to professional services. Religious volunteers would be more helpful if they collaborated with the professionals, according to Josh Spring, executive director of the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless.



When homeless people set up camps, they are sometimes treated as criminals. *REUTERS/Benoit Tessier.*

“We want to see collaboration between the people who are doing this every day and volunteers that feel a call to do this,” he says. “If a group is going out and visits a camp and one of their new friends says, ‘I have this issue, and I’m ready to do something,’ we want those volunteers to call PATH. We want everyone working together, having their own role, getting everyone connected to the bigger picture.”

‘We don’t ask’

That kind of collaboration hasn’t been achieved yet. Earlier this year Melk attended a meeting of the Homeless Outreach Group, made up of social workers, advocates and police officers who specialize in working with homeless people who live outdoors. The meeting didn’t go as planned.

Melk said John 15:12 Ministries protects the locations of homeless camps, knowing that publicity can lead to hate crimes, vandalism and assaults on the people who live there. She declined to tell *Streetvibes* the locations her group planned to visit Oct. 9.

“We are going to the camps prior and let them know what we’re doing and ask if it’s OK to bring guests,” Melk said. “We definitely are going to respect their wishes and get their permission.”

Having asked residents’ permission, Melk later invited a reporter to join the volunteers, but *Streetvibes* declined.

Three kinds of precautions Melk described only go so far. After the Oct. 9 cleanup, John 15:12 Ministries posted

photographs of its project on Facebook. Several of the photos make the location of homeless camps easy to identify.

Melk said the volunteers don’t ask homeless people about any criminal records they might have.

“We just go out and hang out with them,” she said. “We are more concerned with being a friend – not judging them, not holding anything in their past against them.”

Open-mindedness can lead to unexpected trouble, however. When Melk met with the Homeless Outreach Group, she showed slides of her group’s work. She told the social workers that some camp residents have visited the homes of volunteers.

That elicited concern from the social workers. One told Melk that a photo showed her client and asked if Melk knew the person is a former sex offender.

“We don’t ask about that,” Melk reportedly said. “We just trust God.”

Faith is generally considered a virtue. But without knowing a person’s behavioral or mental-health problems, are the church volunteers putting people at risk?

Melk left the outreach meeting in tears, according to several people who were present.

Spring and Drury say they both welcome the assistance of religious people and other volunteers but want to make sure the assistance is actually helpful.

“I value all people with a passion for helping homeless folks in Cincinnati,” Drury

says. “On a monthly basis homeless outreach service providers come together to discuss what’s working and what’s not. We are trying to ensure our efforts are focused on guiding a person out of homelessness when that is their goal. That being said, I’m concerned that going into camps and removing trash may be less than helpful to our struggle. I would like to see faith-based outreach groups in collaboration with us in an effort to end homelessness.”

Caroling at the camps

Its work with homeless people has given John 15:12 Ministries a certain kind of street sense. Organizers warn volunteers, for example, to be wary of the kind of help they give. In an e-mail, Kathy Casper, the group’s founder, described a request that was not granted.

“There is a fine line between helping and enabling,” Casper wrote. “We want to help and be good stewards of God, but yet not enabling. That is a hard one to explain and comes with experience. Just keep in mind, when visiting with the camps, you do not need to give them everything that is asked of you (and they will ask). Example: this weekend one asked someone in my group for a ride to the store. He said, ‘Sure! Annette will take you.’ ... When I asked what was needed, she wanted beer. I then told her no, we do not do beer runs.”

The proof of the ministry’s value is in the lives that have changed, according to Melk.

“We have several transfor-

mation stories of people who have moved on and are now leading productive lives,” she said.

Casper raved about the good that was done Oct. 9.

“The impact of what took place that day cannot be put into words,” she wrote. “People who have never been to the camps or even around the homeless were out socializing in the camps as well as picking up trash. The experience was greater than just picking up trash. It provided those our society deem unworthy with dignity, a sense of self-worth and the knowledge that people do care.”

Spring, however, says the problem of homelessness is more complicated than untrained volunteers appreciate.

“The complicating factor for me is we’re taught to do all this in a professional format,” he says. “Then what is the role for people who want to do something but don’t have that training? At the coalition, our position is they should be on the front lines, advocating for change. But some people prefer to work with individuals.”

“Each has a role. That’s why we need to figure out how these go together. It doesn’t make sense for both groups to work with the same people and have no connection. That just causes more confusion for the people we’re all trying to help.”

Meanwhile John 15:12 Ministries is preparing for another visit to homeless camps – this time to sing Christmas carols.

Confronting the School for Terrorists

Continued from page 8

widows and orphans and trying to spread hope," Romero said.

In his weekly homilies, which were broadcast on radio throughout the country, he named what he saw as the root of evil of Salvadoran brutality.

"Among us there are those who would sell the just man for money and the poor man for a pair of sandals; those who, in their mansions, practice violence and accumulate plunder; those who crush the poor; those who bring the kingdom of violence closer while they lie upon their beds of ivory; those who take over house upon house and field upon field until they appropriate the whole territory, and remain sole owners of the country.

"That is why we have denounced what in our country has become the idolatry of wealth, of the absolute right, within the capitalist system, of private property, of political power in the national security regimes, in the name of which the insecurity of the individual is itself institutionalized. No matter how tragic it may appear, the Church, through its entrance into the socio-political world, has learned how to recognize, how to deepen its understanding of the essence of sin. The fundamental essence of sin in this world of ours is revealed as the death of Salvadorans; and the worst offense against God is to turn the children of God, temples of the Holy Spirit, the body of Christ in history, into victims of oppression and injustice, into slaves to economic greed, into fodder for political repression."

Romero urged journalists to be clear and objective about what was happening in the country, as he had heard reports from abroad that gave a false picture of the truth. In his weekly broadcasts he read the names of those who had been slaughtered that week, their villages and where their body pieces were found. Once "disappeared," they never existed, according to the military, who threatened to kill anyone who came near the newly tortured and decaying bodies found every morning in the streets. Applauded by the poor wherever he went, he was the only dissenting voice willing to name and clear up the confusion, willing to release the anguish of the widowed and orphaned. He also learned he was on the death squads' hit list.

A singularly brave and prophetic dissenting voice despised by the military, Romero's words ring true today: "Because the Church has opted for the real and not for the fictitious poor, because it has opted for those who really are oppressed and repressed, the Church lives in a political world, and it fulfills itself as Church also through politics. It cannot be otherwise if the Church, like Jesus, is to turn itself toward the poor."

'Stop the repression'

In February 1980 Romero wrote to President Jimmy Carter and read the letter from the pulpit:

"Mr. President:

"In recent days, a report has appeared in the national press which has greatly disturbed me.



Marchers carry symbolic caskets, memorializing victims of U.S. foreign policy. *Robert Pohowsky.*

According to the article, your administration is studying the possibility of backing the present government junta and giving it economic and military aid.

"Because you are a Christian and have said that you want to defend human rights, I take the liberty of expressing my pastoral point of view on this matter and of making a specific request.

"The information that the United States government is studying ways in which to build up the armaments of El Salvador greatly disturbs me. Reportedly, you plan to send military equipment and consultants to train three Salvadoran battalions in logistics, communication and intelligence. If in fact this information is correct, the contribution of your government will do nothing to support greater justice and peace in El Salvador. Without doubt, it will intensify injustice and the repression of the organized people who have fought, so many times, for their fundamental rights. ... As a Salvadoran, and as the archbishop of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, I have the obligation to see to it that faith and justice reign in my country. Therefore, if you truly want to defend human rights, I urge you:

"- To prohibit the sending of military aid to the Salvadoran government.

"- To guarantee that your government will not intervene, directly or indirectly, with military, economic, diplomatic or other pressure, to try to determine the destiny of the Salvadoran nation.

"It would be a deplorable injustice if, through the introduction of foreign weapons and forces, the development of the Salvadoran nation was frustrated. Foreign intervention would suppress and impede the autonomous decision-making

process already begun along appropriate economic and political lines."

The letter apparently had little effect, as the money was given. On March 23, 1980, the night before he was gunned down, Romero appealed to the conscience of the ordinary young peasant soldiers, the rank and file of the Salvadoran security forces. It is a famous homily that is known worldwide and often quoted:

"I would like to make a special appeal to the members of the army and specifically to the ranks of the National Guard, the police and the military. Brothers, each one of you is one of us. We are the same people. The peasants you kill are your own brothers and sisters. When you hear the voice of a man commanding you to kill, remember instead the voice of God: 'Thou shalt not kill!' God's law must prevail. No soldier is obliged to obey an order contrary to the law of God. There is still time for you to obey your own conscience, even in the face of a sinful command to kill.

"The Church, defender of the rights of God, of the law of God, and of the dignity of each human being, cannot remain silent in the presence of such abominations.

"The government must understand that reforms, steeped in so much blood, are worthless. In the name of God, in the name of our tormented people whose cries rise up to Heaven, I beseech you, I beg you, I command you, stop the repression!"

Janice Sevre-Duszynska is an ordained Roman Catholic woman priest and a former prisoner of conscience for School of the Americas Watch. For information on the School of the Americas Watch, visit www.soaw.org.

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An Affordable Housing Success Story

From Valley Homes to Villas of the Valley

By MICHELLE DILLINGHAM
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

One of the policy goals Affordable Housing Advocates (AHA) set for 2010 was to increase the amount of affordable housing. Unfortunately, we have found many of our advocacy efforts have been directed simply towards trying to preserve the affordable units we have.

Kelan Craig of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio chairs a recently created Preservation Subcommittee for AHA, which meets to discuss affordable-housing preservation issues, specific buildings of interest and strategies for preserving at-risk properties. He recently posted an article on the AHA Listserv called "Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP): Innovative Development Strategies for Very Low-Income Housing," published by the National Housing Law Project. Based in Oakland, Calif., the National Housing Law Project was established in 1968. It publishes research on housing law and policy issues, and its mission is to advance housing justice for low-income people. The article highlights the Valley Homes Housing in Lincoln Heights as an example of innovative uses of Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds.

In response to the nation's foreclosure crisis, Congress signed into law the Housing and Economic Recovery Act in 2008. Title III of that act created the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) and granted \$3.92 billion dollars for emergency assistance to states to redevelop abandoned and foreclosed homes. The Recovery Act added an additional \$2 billion in NSP funds, known as NSP2, which was allocated using a competitive grant process.

One rule of using NSP funding is that grant recipients must put 25 percent of their funds into

uses that actually result in housing units to be occupied by very low-income households. When I worked at City Hall, a member of Cincinnati City Council suggested NSP funds be used to build a new police station in Price Hill. Of course, the administration informed him this was not an allowable use of the money.

Hamilton County is using NSP funds for the demolition and re-development of Valley Homes Housing in Lincoln Heights. The new housing development will be named, "Villas of the Valley."

Valley Homes was built as a temporary home for African-American workers at the Wrights Aeronautical Plant during World War II and was only meant to house families for six years. Fifty buildings were built in townhouses made up of four to eight units, which totaled about 300 homes. In 1953 a residents' cooperative purchased Valley Homes from the federal government.

The National Housing Law Project publication provides a very informative and detailed account of the Valley Homes history and the subsequent events leading to the NSP funding to re-build Valley Homes. I found this history intriguing and I encourage Streetvibes readers to read the full report.

For brevity's sake, we fast-forward to 2005, when the cooperative owed more than \$200,000 in utility bills and the complex's garbage service was cut off for non-payment. With the help of the Legal Aid Society, a low-income developer took over management and worked with the Model Group, which agreed to redevelop Valley Homes by utilizing NSP funds to provide critical gap-funding.

When Phase I is completed, Villas of the Valley will be 42 two-bedroom cottages for seniors. Thirteen of these will be for very low-income households. Phase II will be 35 townhomes with no age limits, five multi-family units and three or four single-family homes that will be available for purchase.

Interestingly the article notes the original

design included more units that would have included 65 senior accessible cottages. This new configuration required the approval of the zoning commission, but two of the seven members of the zoning commission refused to meet to approve this plan, so the developer was forced to move forward with a reduced plan of 42 accessible units. Again political resistance to the development of low-income housing development rears its ugly head.

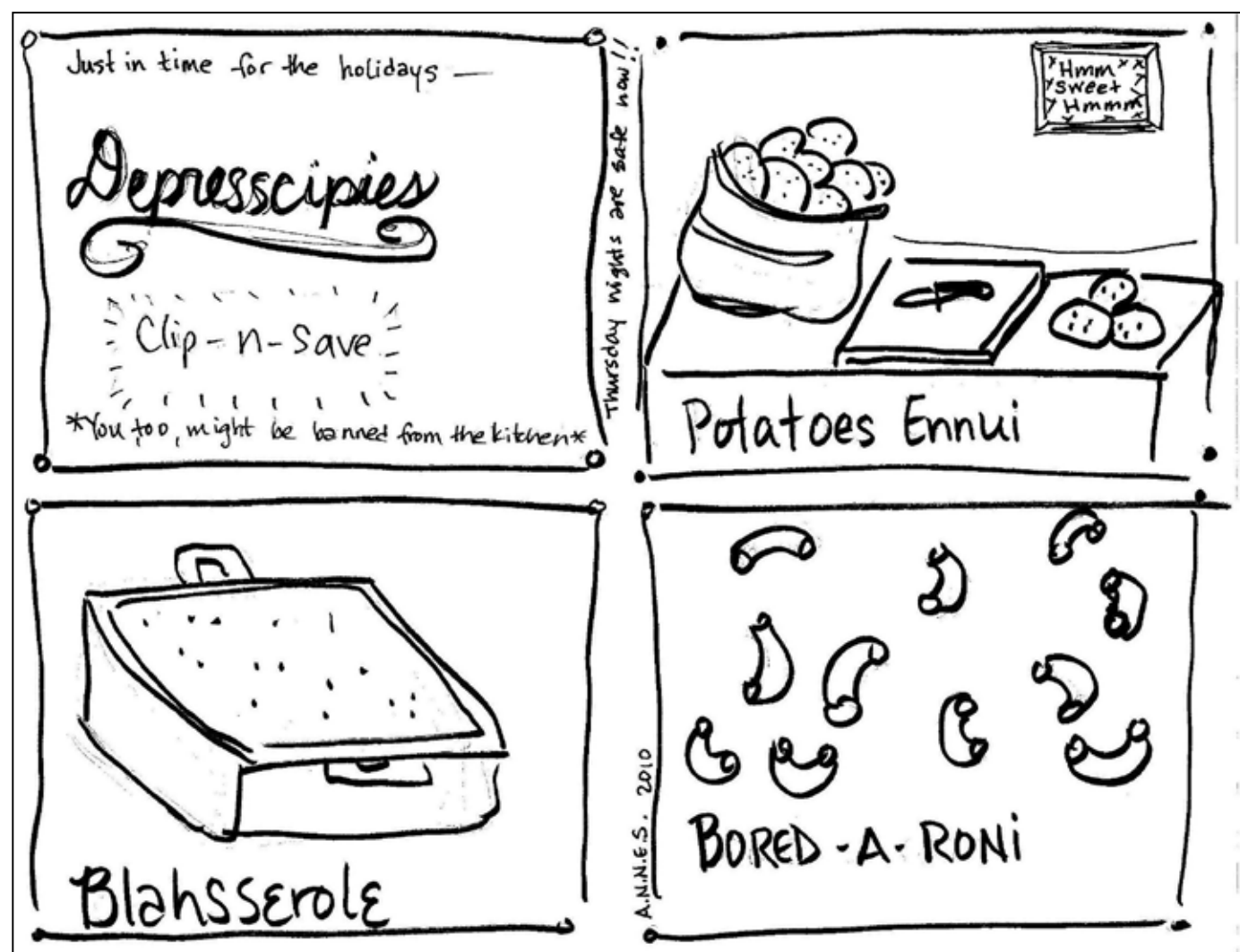
Success in the case of Valley Homes is attributed to the developer's initiating a series of community meetings and showing integrity throughout the process, thereby earning public trust. It also demonstrates the incredible tenacity needed. In order for this all to work, the developer had to pull together NSP funding along with a half-dozen other funding sources. Cobbling together enough funding to support affordable housing development can be extremely complicated, but it is possible.

For more information, visit the National Housing Law Project at www.nhlp.org. For a link to the NSP article, contact Michelle Dillingham, AHA project coordinator, at mdmswls@hotmai.com.

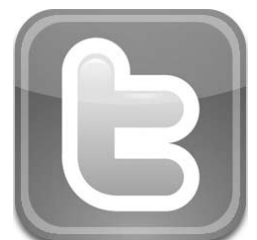


Cartoon

By ANNE SKOVE



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The World's Common Bond

Alex Carruthers reveals the coolest thing ever

By ARIANA SHAHANDEH
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Alex Carruthers is a Cincinnati solo musician, along with being a fourth of the band The Retros, founded by Mia Carruthers, a graduate of the School for the Creative and Performing Arts and member of the cast of MTV's Taking the Stage. He spoke with Streetvibes about the band's search for a label, his love for music and Cincinnati.

Has the band spoken to a label?

"We've only talked to one. We've only talked to Universal. Right now we are getting our electronic press kit together, and then we'll send it out to masses and see what we get back from that. We are just basically trying to get someone to fund our next record because we did the first one by ourselves and we can't afford to do it again.

"When we talked to Universal – they function to do whatever the artist needs them to do. So if we said, 'Hey we need a producer, and we want you to handle everything. We just want to play the songs. We don't even care if we write them.' Or (we) could be like Jack Johnson – he just sends them a master copy and says, 'Here is my masterpiece.' And (Universal will) just do it. That's what we're looking for."

Crosstalk about Cincinnati being "boring" ...

"People always say that, but I disagree. Cincinnati is a cool town. There's always stuff going on around town. I have so much passion for Cincinnati. When people move, they miss their Skyline, their Graeter's. When I was gone for two years, I would just mention to a random person, 'Oh what I would do for a coney right now.' They would say, 'We've got the cans.' But it's not the same. I love Cincinnati. It's where I grew up.

"I call it a bite-size city. It's small, especially compared



Alex Carruthers at the Mad Hatter. James Zaroni.

to big cities. The music scene is decent for the size of the city that we have. There is lots of (music) going on, different genres. It's not like Chicago, where there are lots of bands that sound like they are from Chicago. I don't think there is a Cincinnati sound, which is cool. And that's also something that is still up for grabs, which is interesting to me as well."

I'm sensing some competitiveness.

"Oh there is always competition, and I'm very competitive in nature. But that's the thing I love about music: There is no competition, there is only collaboration. How can you be better than another band? There is no scale or judging, you can't win a championship for being in a band. It's either you create great music and you entertain people or you don't. You get to that level where you get paid to do it, and then that's it.

"It's all about doing what you love. I've gotten a lot of comments about that. I play in a ballgame with Seth and a couple of my friends. Some guys I went to high school with are on the team, and I haven't seen them in years. They are like, 'What are you doing?' 'I'm playing music.' And they (say,) 'I'm working at AT&T' or whatever. During one of our games, (someone says,) 'Nobody gets to do what they want at this age, except for Alex.' I was like, 'What?' 'Yeah, you are the only one that gets to do what they love.' That's cool, that's really special. I think I don't have as much money as I'd like to have and everything set up ideally. But the fact that I can get up every day and come to work and absolutely love it. When I play (solo, acoustic) gigs, I just people-watch the whole time – pick up on what songs

they might like just by looking at them. With time, you get good at that. You learn a lot about people without ever talking to them. Having them listen to my music, I understand a little bit about them."

What is something you have the most doubt over?

"That's a tough question. You put me on the spot. I don't know ... maybe time? In that, this is a young man's game. I'm not old by any stretch of the word, but I look at my band, like Mia (Carruthers) and Seth (Ewing Huff), and they are three or four years younger than me. I fear and doubt that I'll

get too old before something may happen."

How old is too old? Your dad (Dan Carruthers is also a musician and the band's manager) is going to be pissed when he hears that.

"My dad still says the same thing. He'll (say,) 'Aw, I'm too old.' I know that he's not. That's the thing that's cool about music, that you can never be too old, as long as your fingers can move and your voice can sing and your brain can think in a musical way. It's based on old hearing; you can be deaf and still play music. That's why I have on the back of my business card, 'Music is the world's

common bond.' "


Coincidentally, I can agree.

"I truly believe that. I can go anywhere in the entire world and play a song that has rhythm and that has a refrain, and anybody that has heard anything like that can understand: 'Oh, I understand that he is playing music, by the rhythm and the beat.' Or by the sound of the guitar, or whatever they might be able to understand and recognize, and I think that is the coolest thing ever."

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I Am Elisa

By ELISA HILL

I am Elisa!
But, in my family I'm known as the darkest grape on the vine.
I am the one who is always willing to forgive all the unkind.
They refuse to see me as being dark and truly lovely.
They just don't know that I am one of Gods special angels, yes one of many.
I am Elisa!
I have survived the hurt, pain, rape and despair.
My God has blessed me with this poetry light so beware.
I am thriving because of the unconditional love in my heart.
I am Elisa!
The precious one who after attempting suicide
God gave me a second start.
I know in this life that I am the one to take this stance.
I am Elisa!
Yes!
I may be called crazy but I am beautifully cool with a great style just by chance.
I want to be today's Mya walking that mile with Gods hand.
So who do I think I am, you ask?
I am Elisa, a poet here and now!
So joyfully I can smile and say with a great strength and determination.
World, I am Elisa and my time is now!

Believe It

By WILLA D. JONES

Believe it when you see someone bundle up sleeping in the street
Believe it when you see someone looking in the garbage for food to eat
Believe it cause all of these things are real and none are made up
Believe that there are many men, women and children who are down on their luck
Believe that with the economy all twisted and headed straight to hell
Believe that there are many who just give up, commit suicide or take leave for a jail cell
Believe that, to the homeless, jail with three hot meals, cell buddies for friends and a cot
Believe to some may mean nothing but to the homeless means one hell of a lot
Believe with faith all things are possible for all including you and me
Believe in God, have faith and pray then change will come all you have to do is believe

Achilles Heel

By JOSH McCONNELL

Love, is my Achilles' heel.
Another night of lonely glow of sorrow that breaks my spirits shine.
Like a poisonous arrow to the foot, I take a tender heart into a whirlwind of oblivion,
Round and round it goes as the hole of agonizing pain settles in and grows wider and
Deeper as I sink deeper into the core like clock-work.
I can't go backwards, can't go forward and I cannot stay in neutral,
I am in a dilemma, a state of discombobulation.
They say love is blind, beautiful, strong and forever, but never did they say that love is
Also hard work, stressful, frightening and sometimes torture.
When you know in your heart the love you feel is the love that's real, love can save you
Make you strong and righteous, love can at the same time make you weak,
Love can destroy you and love can also be your Achilles' heel too!

Reclaim Your Dignity... Reclaim Your Voice

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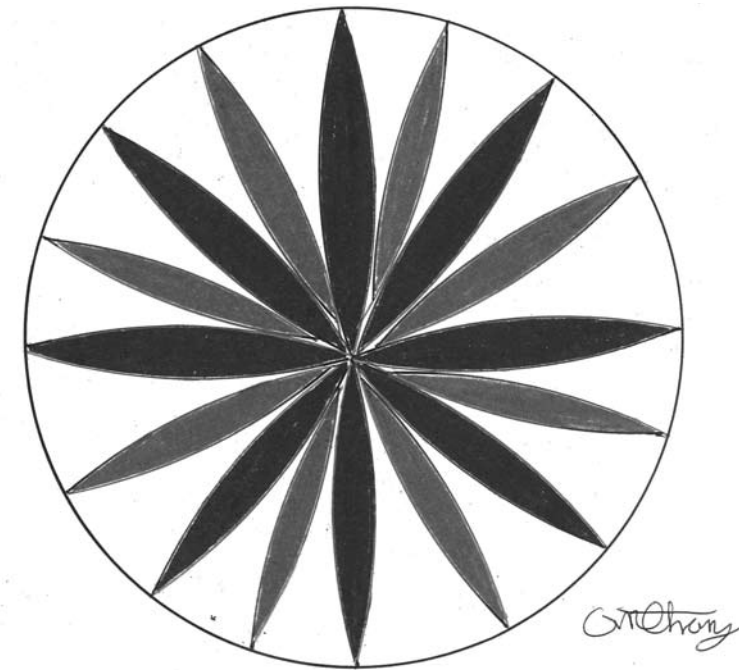
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Panel discussion

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Anthony Williams Art



Cleo's Joke Corner

A preacher and his son were walking by a gravestone.

The gravestone said, “Where you are, I once was. Where I am, you’re going to be.”

The preacher took a crayon from his son and wrote on the gravestone, “To follow you, I am content. But I don’t think I will, because I don’t know where you went.”

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Mt. Airy Shelter	661-4620

Shelter: Both

Anthony House (Youth)	961-4080
2728 Glendora Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45209	
Caracole (HIV/AIDS)	761-1480
1821 Summit Road, Cinti, Ohio 45237	
Drop Inn Center	721-0643
217 W. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Interfaith Hospitality Network	471-1100
Lighthouse Youth Center (Youth)	221-3350
3330 Jefferson, Cinti, Ohio 45220	

Housing:

CMHA	721-4580
Excel Development	632-7149
OTR Community Housing	381-1171
114 W. 14th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Tender Mercies	721-8666
27 W. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Tom Geiger House	961-4555
Dana Transitional Bridge Services	751-0643
Volunteers of America	381-1954
Anna Louise Inn	421-5211

Food/Clothing

Lord’s Pantry	621-5300
OTR/Walnut Hills Kitchen & Pantry	961-1983
OTR: 1620 Vine Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Walnut Hills: 2631 Gilbert, Cinti, Ohio 45206	
Our Daily Bread	621-6364
1730 Race Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	

St. Francis Soup Kitchen	535-2719
Churches Active in Northside	591-2246
4230 Hamilton Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45223	
FreeStore/FoodBank	241-1064
112 E. Liberty Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Madisonville Ed & Assistance Center	271-5501
4600 Erie Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45227	
Serves area codes: 45226, 45227, 45208, 45209	
St. Vincent de Paul	562-8841
1125 Bank Street, Cinti, Ohio 45214	

Treatment: Men

Charlie’s 3/4 House	784-1853
2121 Vine Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Prospect House	921-1613
682 Hawthorne Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45205	
Starting Over	961-2256

Treatment: Women

First Step Home	961-4663
2203 Fulton, Cinti, Ohio 45206	

Treatment: Both

AA Hotline	351-0422
CCAT	381-6672
830 Ezzard Charles Dr. Cinti, Ohio 45214	
Joseph House (Veterans)	241-2965
1522 Republic Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Hamilton County ADAS Board	946-4888
Recovery Health Access Center	281-7422
Sober Living	681-0324
Talbert House	641-4300

Advocacy

Catholic Social Action	421-3131
Community Action Agency	569-1840
Contact Center	381-4242
1227 Vine Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Franciscan JPIC	721-4700
Gr. Cinti Coalition for the Homeless	421-7803
117 E. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Intercommunity Justice & Peace Cr.	579-8547
Legal Aid Society	241-9400
Ohio Justice & Policy Center	421-1108
Faces Without Places	363-3300
Stop AIDS	421-2437

Health

Center for Respite Care	621-1868
3550 Washington Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45229	

Crossroad Health Center	381-2247
5 E. Liberty St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Health Resource Center	357-4602
Homeless Mobile Health Van	352-2902
McMicken Dental Clinic	352-6363
40 E. McMicken Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Mental Health Access Point	558-8888
Mercy Franciscan at St. John	981-5800
1800 Logan St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
NAMI of Hamilton County	458-6670
PATH Outreach	977-4489

Other Resources

Center Independent Living Options	241-2600
Emmanuel Community Center	241-2563
1308 Race St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Peaslee Neighborhood Center	621-5514
214 E. 14th St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Franciscan Haircuts from the Heart	381-0111
1800 Logan St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
Goodwill industries	771-4800
Healing Connections	751-0600
Mary Magdalen House	721-4811
1223 Main St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	
People Working Cooperatively	351-7921
The Caring Place	631-1114
United Way	211
Women Helping Women	977-5541
Off The Streets	421-5211

Hamilton/Middletown

St. Raephaels	863-3184
Salvation Army	863-1445
Serenity House Day Center	422-8555
Open Door Pantry	868-3276

Northern Kentucky

Brighton Center	859-491-8303
799 Ann St. Newport, KY	
ECHO/Hosea House	859-261-5857
Fairhaven Resuce Mission	859-491-1027
Homeward Bound Youth	859-581-1111
Mathews House	859-261-8009
Homeless & Housing Coalition	859-727-0926
Parish Kitchen	859-581-7745
Pike St. Clinic	859-291-9321
Transitions, Inc	859-491-4435
Welcome House of NKY	859-431-8717
205 West Pike Street, Covington, KY 41011	
Women’s Crisis Center	859-491-3335
VA Domiciliary	859-559-5011
VA Homeless	859-572-6226

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Drawing for Peace

Steve Sunderland's artistic vocabulary

Artists as Activists

By SAAD GHOSN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

"A question always haunts me: What am I doing for peace?" says Steve Sunderland, an artist, writer and professor of social work at the University of Cincinnati (UC). Sunderland is the director of "Peace Village," a healing educational organization he founded after the 2001 Cincinnati riots and the 9/11 Trade Center attack; it uses art, music, conferences and various creative means to heal from violence and promote inner and social peace.

Sunderland actually has done and daily does a lot for peace.

Growing up in New York City in the 1950s and '60s, early on he developed good organizing skills that found him an important player in many social justice and liberation movements. As a college student he was actively involved in the hunger program for Mississippi, the Civil Rights Movement in Washington, D.C., desegregation and setting up a union for graduate students at Indiana University/Bloomington, promotion of student academic freedom of speech under the American Students Organization and development of compassionate and inclusive means to fight anti-Semitism as part of the National Training Laboratories.

After graduating from Case Western Reserve University with a Ph.D. in organizational behavior and administration, his energy focused on desegregating higher education. He functioned as vice president of the Master Plan at City University in New York City, helping integrate 25,000 African-American and Hispanic students based on open-admissions policy. Then, until the 1977 recession, he was head of a small college for African-American and underprivileged individuals in New York, pulling them out of welfare and enrolling them into a master's degree program that combined study and work.

This is when he moved to Cincinnati to join UC, initially as dean of the College of Community Services, then

as a professor at the School of Social Work and lately at the School of Education. At UC he continued his activist work toward the integration of higher education.

As an organizer, Sunderland followed in the steps of his father, a British immigrant, labor organizer and communist leader in New York City in the late 1930s. As an artist, Sunderland took his inspiration from his maternal aunt, a mentally handicapped artist whose beautiful paintings adorned the walls of his family house. For two years he attended the first public High School of Music and Art in the country, in the center of Harlem. Students of all ethnic backgrounds populated it, his first experience with real diversity.

Sunderland, however, did not do art until he was in his sixties. Art came back into his life with the 2001 Cincinnati riots and the 9/11 attacks of the same year. Inspired by Jacob Lawrence's documentation of Harriet Tubman's and Frederick Douglass's life stories on particleboards, he decided to use cardboards to document and reflect the events going on at the time. Armed with cardboards, markers and crayons, he mingled with the rioting crowds, watched, listened and drew mostly the faces and emotions of those present. He also involved his UC students, enrolled in a class on conflict resolution, to do the same. Witnessing the events through the faces and feelings of participants rendered on cardboard grew in scope and intensity, and Posters4Peace was born.

Sunderland has since been using the technique non-stop. He drew people's reactions to the 9/11 attacks. For the past nine years he has drawn the feelings of participants in a yearly Vietnam peace conference led by Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hahn; the conference includes Vietnam War vets, anti-war protesters and Vietnamese people, all gathered for healing and reconciliation.

With students, Sunderland



Steve Sunderland stands in front of *Dreaming of College*, his cardboard pastel drawing. (above) Photo by Saad Ghosn.



What Is Inclusion, cardboard pastel drawing, by Steve Sunderland. (left) Photo by Saad Ghosn.

draws scenes of hunger. With children, he draws events that affect them. He also draws themes of inclusion in the classroom, natural disasters such as the tsunami in Indonesia and earthquake in Haiti, wars and the misery of death.

"I draw about the pain I encounter or experience, pain of those who want social justice, fairness, pain caused by poverty, loss of hope, no jobs, racism," he says. "I draw mostly faces of people I meet. I draw them myself; also invite them, if willing, to partake in the activity. Afterwards we all share the images, discuss feelings and messages."

After the 2001 Cincinnati riots, when the city hired a consultant to mediate between police and the community, Sunderland was invited to join in to elicit police officers' and citizens' feelings about the violence. Drawing on cardboard, he prompted participants with two questions: "How do you feel about the riots? And what would your drawing of a healthy city be?" He obtained hundreds of response drawings that served as conversation starters to address the issues; they eventually contributed to a peace treaty with the police.

After the 9/11 attacks, drawings were reactions to the events, to the sense of impotence generated and to how to respond to the tragedy. With the Vietnam vets, they were about feelings of hurt, regret and anger.

In all instances, Sunderland uses the drawings as vehicles for an immediate reflection on the problem addressed, an expression of his own reaction and feelings and those of others involved, everyone empowered and engaged in a dialogue for a peaceful resolution.

"Art provides a vocabulary; it is a liberating activity," he says. "It is also a communication tool that allows exchange of ideas, feelings. Art can plant a seed of compassion and function as an instrument for peace. Drawing images and feelings, sharing and discussing them, break down artificial boundaries between individuals, lead them to a deeper appreciation of their humaneness."

Through Peace Village and with his students at UC, Sunderland has recently focused on inclusion, hunger and Islam.

His drawing, *What is Inclusion*, created in response to a conference of disabled individuals, ponders

whether there is room in our hearts for mixing people despite their disability – or only room for segregation. *Dreaming of College* is about the disabled student wanting to be in college but not in an isolated corner.

Sunderland is also a writer who authors a regular column on peace in the monthly online Metro newspaper.

"I want both my art and writing to be at the human level," he says. "My work illuminates peace in some fashion, catching a look on the face of a person, a word or expression that throws light on justice – sketches of hope and compassion in a world that struggles to keep peace alive. I want my drawings to heighten reflection and action for and with others. Through art and conversation, I aim to rebuild the world of people caught in tsunamis of violence and despair, to signal the powerful inner spirit of love."

Artists as Activists is a regular column highlighting Greater Cincinnati artists who use art as a vehicle for social change. Saad Ghosn is the founder of SOS Art. Ghosn can be reached at saad.ghosn@uc.edu.